John Deere Helping Illinois

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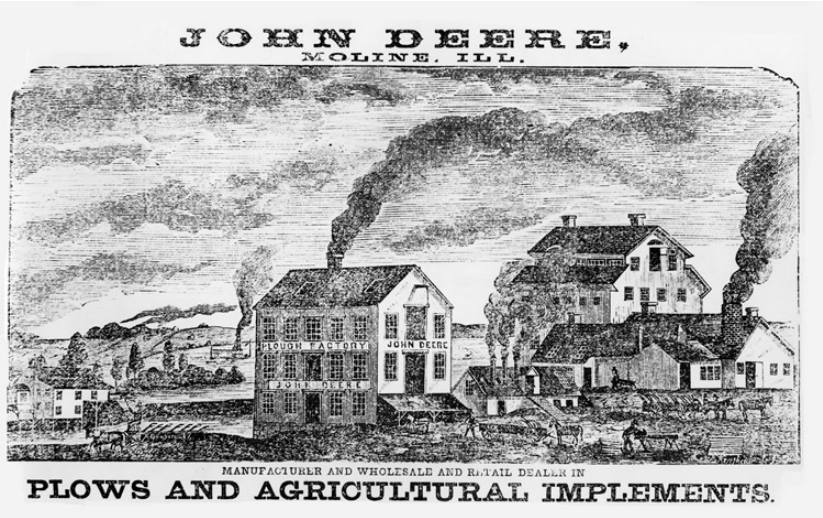
It took a strong man and a team of oxen ninety-six hours to plow one acre of land in the nineteenth century, but John Deere developed a new plow that sped up the plowing process and is still affecting the lives of people in Illinois. John Deere was a hardworking man. Deere developed the plow that turned into a farm-equipment establishment of today. His works benefit people worldwide, but also the area in which I live.

Deere was born on February 7, 1804 in Rutland, Vermont. He became an apprentice to a blacksmith at the age of seventeen. His apprenticeship ended in 1825. He immediately became a blacksmith and opened a shop in Vermont. He went bankrupt because there were too many blacksmiths in his area. He sold his shop to his father-in-law and moved to Grand Detour, Illinois. He arrived with his tools and seventy-five dollars. While in Illinois he soon learned that the people, much like the people in Vermont, had problems plowing fields. In Illinois the sticky soil made the problem greater. To plow well in Illinois, farmers had to use eight yoke of oxen. This was very expensive and the farmers of the area could not afford these oxen. Deere set out to develop a faster and more effective way to plow.

Deere visited the sawmill of Leonard Andru and saw a broken saw blade. Deere took the blade and chiseled off the teeth, heated, then shaped the blade to the proper shape. The blade, from its use at the mill, had a very smooth, slick polished surface. This kept the sticky soil from clinging on the blade. Deere finished his first plow in 1837. This plow was more effective than the other modern plows. Deere made two more plows in 1838, which he gave to friends in the Grand Detour area. Deere made ten plows in 1839, which he sold for ten to twelve dollars. In 1840 he made forty plows, in 1841 seventy-five, in 1842 one hundred, and in 1843 he made four hundred plows.



Photograph Courtesy of the Illinois State Historical Library

Deere decided that Grand Detour was not the right place for a large business because he would not be able to transport the plows to other places. Deere packed up and moved to Moline, Illinois, which is located on the Mississippi River where he could make plows for wide distribution. In Moline, sales continued to rise. He sold seven hundred and twelve hundred were on back order. Deere began to invest in new machines that allowed him to make more and more plows. In one year he was able to make 2,136 plows.

John Deere and Company was able to change with the times. The company designed and developed many new machines that continued to speed up and enhance the farming processes. All of the work that John Deere and his company did has helped Illinois greatly. In the 1990s the state's 76,000 farms helped to make more than nine billion dollars. On these farms there are 120,000 people who can say that their jobs are affected by the John Deere company in some way. The Deere company itself has more than 37,000 employees and 7,300 of them work in Illinois. There are also eighty-two dealers in Illinois. According to the John Deere company, in 1997 they made more than $440,800,000, much of which was put back into Illinois' economy. [From Hiram Drache, "The Impact of John Deere's Plow", Illinois History Teacher (2001); Curtis Linke, "John Deere", Farm World, Jan. 1, 1980; Katie Thompson, "John Deere pioneers the prairie plow", He gave the steel plow to the world, http://www.field-reporter.com/The_Green_Girl/gg-11-20-00.htm, (Sept. 20, 2003).]

The Development of John Deere Tractors and Their Impacts on Rural Life

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Although farmers had lived without them for years, tractors quickly became an indispensable tool for farmers when they became available. This rapid development caused a huge increase of production at the cost of putting a severe strain on the farmer and his family. One Illinois based company, Deere and Company, often times was the major producer of their tractors.

According to the *Ultimate John Deere*, John Deere was born in Vermont on February 7, 1804. He was the fifth child of a Welsh tailor. Deere moved to Grand Detour, Illinois, in 1836 where he set up a blacksmith shop. In 1837, Deere made the first of his soon to be famous plows. In 1848, Deere moved to Moline, Illinois, to be closer to shipping lines. For the next seventy-one years, Deere and Company stayed out of the tractor business and concentrated on developing plows and other such implements. In 1919 that changed because Deere produced its first tractor, the Deere All-Wheel-Drive. It featured three wheels with two in front and one in the rear. Only 100 were ever produced because it was too expensive. In 1918, Deere and Company bought Waterloo Gasoline Engine Company. This company had already established its own tractor model called the Waterloo Boy. Suddenly Deere and Company was in the tractor race.

Deere's rivals were far ahead. Chicago-based IHC and Detroit-based Ford had tractor lines whose sales were soaring. In 1923, Deere released the Model D. It was the first Waterloo tractor to carry the John Deere name. This tractor set the pattern for all of Deere's two-cylinder tractors. In 1928, the company came out with the GP. This tractor was designed to be a row-crop tractor with the middle row going between the front two wheels. It introduced a power lift for a mounted three-row cultivator and planter. In 1934 Deere introduced the Model A. This was a tricycle row-crop tractor that was almost completely reworked inside. A year later, Deere introduced the Model B. These two tractors were Deere's all-time bestsellers. The B was basically a smaller A. Several specialized versions of both tractors were introduced before the lines were discontinued in 1952. By 1938 rubber tires were quickly on their way to replacing the steel tires of old on almost every tractor in America. In 1937 the company released the Model G. The G was designed to "appeal to the large-acreage corn grower" according to John Deere advertisements. It was the most powerful tractor of the time. The Model L was also introduced in 1937. It was at the exact opposite end of the power spectrum from the G. This tractor was designed for the vegetable growers.

That same year of 1937 saw other change for Deere tractors. The company hired Henry Dreyfuss and his group to style all of the company's tractors. This gave the tractors a more appealing look and a boost in horsepower. It also allowed for better visibility. In 1939 the company released the H. This tractor looked like a smaller A and B. Deere's product lines remained largely the same until after World War II.

Then, in 1947, Deere introduced the Model R Diesel. This tractor replaced the D and was the first Deere with more than fifty horsepower. This tractor tipped off a horsepower race. The next tractors were introduced in 1952 when the fifty and sixty series tractors were produced. Designed to replace the B and A, these tractors made improvements to give "faster starts, snappier response, smoother operation at all throttle settings, outstanding fuel economy, and prolonged spark plug life" according to Deere advertisements. Power steering and rack-and-

pinion adjustments of rear tires were industry first. In 1953 the Model 70 was introduced. This replaced the G. This year also saw the Model forty replace the Model M. In 1955 the Model 80 replaced the R. This diesel tractor was a full five-plow tractor. That year also saw the 20 series tractor introduced. This series increased the power of both the 50 and 60. By 1956, the Model 820 was the leader of the Deere line. The year also introduced the 320. It was a small tractor with the hydraulics of the big tractors. It replaced the 40. There was one more addition to this series in 1958 under the name of 30 Series. This was basically styling changes that made it more user friendly. This was really a mask for a secret project seven years in the making.

In 1959 Deere gave a sneak peak of what was to come. It unveiled the 8010, a four-wheel drive tractor with a rating of 150 drawbar horsepower. A year later it was upgraded as the 8020. Then, on August 30, 1960, the world learned what Deere had been up to. Deere released the models 1010, 2010, 3010, and 4010. These tractors were completely redesigned. They marked the most radical changes since the A and B. Many of the changes to these models led the industry for years.

What did these changes mean for farmers? Farm life had always been hard and it remained hard. In 1900 the average farmer worked 68 hour weeks, 12 hours longer than industrial workers. This was mostly because with more efficient planting and harvesting machines, farmers had to either acquire more acres or give up farming. It was considered normal for the husband and wife to always be tired and for children not to have much childhood. Even though these farmers supplied the food for the nation, electricity, indoor plumbing, and paved roads were rarities well into the twentieth century.

In conclusion, tractors had a profound effect on Illinois farmers. John Deere's company was a major force in the development of larger and more powerful tractors. This made it possible to have larger farms and placed a huge strain on farmers and their families to acquire larger farms. [From Ralph W. Sanders, *Ultimate John Deere*; Keith Miller, *The West: Farming in the Great West (Part Two): Thresher's coming, putting hay in the loft,* http://hnn.us/articles/656.html3-27-02; James A Henretta, David Brody, Susan Ware, and Marilynn S. Johnson, *America's History*.]

The Lost Dream of the Farmers Union

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In 1900, circumstances were changing on the farm. Population in American cities stood at 30,160,000, while farms had 29,875,000 people. This was the first time in the American census that farm population was in the minority. According to one historian, "The prior two decades had brought new signs of rural stress, as well. Huge increases in the number of acres put to grain and the ubiquitous presence of the railroads created a true national agricultural market, sharply reducing the importance of local economies and driving down prices." There were new questions to be faced, notably: "How could America hold onto the next generation of farmers?"

As one response, the Farmers' Union originated in Point, Texas, in 1902. Newton Greshman, a county editor and farmer, was its founder. Greshman had concluded that farmers needed to build cooperatives to help themselves in the marketing of their products, rather than relying on "middlemen." He also believed that the farmers needed to be educated on the problems that led to periodic depressions. The creators of the Farmers Union held, moreover, that a major reason for the breakdown of the farm economy had been of the lack of organization among family farmers.

Illinois was one of only eleven states that had no Farmers Union chapter by 1946. Organization of the Illinois Farmers Union began in 1954. To recruit farmers to join, early members visited neighbors, trying to get them to join.

The Farm Bureau also existed. It was a much bigger organization, and had support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Farmers Union was for the family farm, while the Farm Bureau tended to encourage bigger, mass-production-type farms. Farm Bureau members were mostly Republicans, while the Farmers Union was mostly composed of Democrats.

There were also differences between these two organizations in ideals and goals. The Farmers Union asked that state legislatures and the U.S. Congress do for them what had been done for others. The Farmers Union pointed to the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," as their guide. They believed right and truth would prevail. The Farmers Union pamphlet, "For This We Stand," outlined more specific beliefs:

-That abundant production is in the public interest.
-That assured abundance requires a safety margin of surplus production.
-That justice demands protection of an income in return for the farmer's contribution of an adequate food supply.
-That only the federal government can assure justice to farmers.

The Farmers Union fought for parity for farm families. After World War I, farmers' gross income steadily declined. In 1919, farming income was $18 billion, but by 1932 it was down to $5 billion. Both farms and farm workers were victims of economic change over which they had no control.

The Farmers Union defined parity as, "The right of Farm Families by their work, management and property ownership to be able to earn incomes equivalent to those earned by people (with skill and effort) in other walks of life." As applied to income, parity was, "That

gross income from agriculture which will provide the farm operator and his family with a standard of living equivalent to those afforded persons dependant upon other gainful occupations." In 1951, the national income and farm operators income stood equal at a scale of 100, but by 1956 the national income was up to 123 and the farm operators was down to 70.

Photograph Courtesy of the author

Calvin Ferguson, a retired farmer in Winnebago County, remembers the days of the Farmers Union, "We fought like heck," he reports. "Farmers hurt themselves with some of the things they did. It was an interesting time. Not too many people were Democrats. I finally gave up talking to the farmers. They always responded, 'Oh well. It will be better. Maybe next year?' Next year came and it wasn't." Retired Winnebago County farmer Leroy Gleasman, when asked what he remembers of Farmers Union, responded: "Ed Belin, Ed Wells, Cal Ferguson, Oscar Swanson and I traveled all over the state many, many times to get the state organization going." Ed's daughter Betsy Carlson remembers that, "Farmers Union was very much a part of my childhood...Daddy drove all over for it. It meant many meetings in Springfield. There was a sense of urgency and importance at our house."

The Farmers Union grew entangled in national politics. At this time, "The National Farmers Union, the smallest of the nation's three major farm organizations, stood alone in rejecting this Cold War mentality." Critics said that the Farmers Union was sympathizing with the communists. Maybe, in the world of one historian this could be explained by, "the continued animosity between the Farmers Union and the Farm Bureau and by the desire of the latter to keep its rival under public suspicion."

In the late 1950s Edwin Belin became the last president of the Farmers Union in Winnebago County. Katherine Burns Meyers-Phelps, whose father Leo Burns in 1954-1955 helped found the Farmers Union in Winnebago County, reports: "My father was such a strong Democrat that if the devil ran, he would still probably have voted for him. He felt close to Ed Belin and to the cause." She also remembers that, "They (Farmers Union) were up against something big. Farm Bureau was national."

Betsy Carlson recalls that, "Sometime in the mid '60s, after about ten years, Farmers Union in Winnegabo County just died. I remember my mother pressuring my father to just let it go... I believe she was tired of all the work he put into the organization without a succeeding

generation of leadership coming forward. At some point there wasn't a Farmers Union anymore." She continues, "In the late '60s, we began to hear bout the NFO (National Farmers Organization) organization. I believe, Bill Cannell came by and talked to my father. I remember asking him if he was going to join. His answer, 'No, I'm done'." [From Charles Simon Barret, *The Mission, History and Times of the Farmers' Union*; Allan Carlson, *The New Agrarian Mind*; student historian's interview with Betsy Carlson (Edwin Beliu's daughter), Sept. 26, 2003; Gladys Talbott Edwards, ed., "This is the Farmers' Union;" student historian's interview with Calvin Ferguson (former Winnebago county Farmers' Union member), Sept. 24, 2003; Bruce E. Field, *Harvest of Dissent*; For This We Stand, Farmers' Union Policy Leaflets No. 1-10; student historian's interview with LeRoy Gleasman (former Winnebago County Farmers' Union member), Sept. 24, 2003; *Illinois Union Farmer* (Nov. 1956); David Edgar Lindstrom, *American Farmers and Rural Organizations*; Everett E. Luoma, *The Farmers Takes a Holiday*; student historian's interview with Katherine Burus Meyers-Phelps (Leo Burns' daughter), Sept. 23, 2003; Alvin E. O'Konski, "Farmers' Union Represents Family Type Farmers", student historian's interview with Larry Quandt (Illinois Farmers' Union President, 2003), Sept. 29, 2003; Hal C. Nelson, ed., *Siuuissippi Saga*.]

Secrets Behind the Southern Illinois Peaches

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Many people do not know the secrets behind the luscious peaches of southern Illinois. They simply come to enjoy those sweet peaches without realizing that behind them are Mexican migrant workers living in Union and Jackson counties. These workers have a tradition of strenuous labor in return for minimal earnings. The Mexicans also have to face discrimination, poverty, and lack of education. Most have less than a sixth-grade education. These workers came from Mexico to southern Illinois during World War II. Through the years migrants sought to improve their benefits, education, living conditions, and fight against discrimination.

Some Mexicans came to the United States as early as the 1840s. However, it was not until the beginning of World War II that a steady flow of Mexican immigrants arrived. The war created a shortage of workers in the United States and Mexicans saw job opportunities as a way out of their poverty. When the migrant population began to increase, the need for accommodations grew. Orchard owners asked the Farm Bureau to construct migrant camps. However, the Farm Bureau suggested operating a tent rental service so that the growers could have their workers on their own land. The Farm Bureau provided working toilets and drinking water. Over the decades the immigration rate continued to increase and by the late 1900s there were more than 117,200 Mexicans in Illinois. It was then the state with the largest number of Mexicans in the Midwest. Today out of the thousand farm workers in Union and Jackson County area, 80 percent are Spanish speakers.

At first the migrants were welcomed, as evidenced in the April 5,1879 *Jonesboro Gazette:* "pickers are already coming in at some of the largest growers in such numbers as to make business quite lively .., in the way of dry goods and groceries". By the 1880s many people greeted them as a nuisance. The *Jonesboro Gazette, Alto Pass News* and *The Cobden News* for May 14,1887, complained "The tramp pickers are about as numerous as usual, and, as is always the case, are ... begging from house to house for something to eat." This did not stop the migrants. The Americans saw their painful poverty but seemed to treat their condition as a fact of nature.

The goal for migrant parents was and is to give their children a better life. The goal for migrant children is to work very hard so their parents' hard work is not in vain. The story of Evelia Nava, illustrates this. She came to the United States at the age of 18 as an immigrant with her brother. Today her family is very poor and she has been working in the fields for as long as she can remember. Nava describes her decision to immigrate by saying, "I wasn't in search of the American Dream; rather I wanted to work very hard and earn money to help my family economically; I want them to have a better life." The job search led her to Cobden, where she works in an orchard. The housing conditions for migrant laborers are frequently substandard. While Illinois has a migrant labor camp code, which requires housing unit inspections, it only applies to sites with four or more families or ten or more workers. Not covered are the residences of many migrant farm workers who must find their own housing. For seasonal workers who do not live in labor camps, affordable housing is a critical need. The lack of affordable housing is almost impossible to surmount for families who do not have adequate income for rent. By living in these conditions the threat of recurring infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, is aggravated

by crowding in migrant housing and poor sanitation. For Evelia, work is not the hardest part. She has not seen her family in eight years because travel is very expensive. This is common in many migrant families. Almost all of the migrants suffer from the pain of not being close to their families, especially when a tragedy strikes the family. The pain is mutual because the family that stays in Mexico also suffers.

Another illustration of problems for migrants can be seen with the Carmona family. They came to Southern Illinois seeking jobs. The mother stayed in Mexico with the younger children while the oldest came with the father. A tragedy hit, says Esmeraldo Carmona, "when my father got sick and couldn't work any more. My father returned to Mexico. At fifteen I arrived in Cobden and lived with my brother and eighteen people in a two bedroom apartment." Being in a new place, Esmeraldo could not understand the language or find better accommodations. There has been some progress with the creation of programs like the Illinois Migrant Council, the main purpose of which is to provide services to migrant families. The Migrant Health Service also helps with scheduling doctors' appointments providing prescriptions for five dollars. These are all steps that the Department of Agriculture has taken to increase the benefits for the migrant laborers. However, the conditions for the laborers are still poor. There is limited sanitation, and there is one portable bathroom for thirty workers. The workers eat their meals contaminated with pesticides.

The Carmona family worked in the orchards from early spring until November when the season was over. In the early spring they pruned the trees, harvested and packed the products. During the orchards' busy season, the migrants worked from twelve to fifteen hours a day with an hour off for lunch. Even though migrants worked long hours, they did not earn much money. The little money that they have saved was used to get through the winter or migrate in the search of another job.

Migrants are considered the most disadvantaged social group in the United States with an estimated seventy-three percent of migrant farm workers. Migrants also face the highest dropout rate among the Hispanic-American ethnic groups. Migrant high school dropout rates range from forty-five percent to sixty-five percent, which is almost double the national average dropout rate. The city of Cobden is trying to help with these problems by founding programs like the Amigos, which is made up of Hispanic children who cannot speak English. Amigos provides the children with Spanish-speaking teachers. It also creates classes that are taught in both in English and Spanish. Cobden also provides summer school for migrant children. The summer school provides a form of childcare while parents work for long hours in the fields. It also has classes to help the children reach the same learning level as the rest of their Cobden schoolmates.

Things are still hard for migrant laborers and their families. New programs are helping these working people but much remains to be done both with housing and education. The community of Cobden is trying to help by providing education to migrant children as well as jobs for their parents. Immigrants now have jobs; they might not be the best but it is a start for a better future. Migrant laborers do a variety of jobs such as picking peaches, which people in the community buy without realizing the hard work that it took to pick them. Migrant workers need the help of the community in order for them to provide delicious fruits and vegetables in southern Illinois. [From: Jane Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life;* Warren D. Anderson, *Ethnic Identity and Migration Among Mexican Wage Laborers in Southern Illinois*; Carol Huang, *The Political Economy of Migrant Education from 1968 to 2000 – A Policy Reflection*; *Jonesboro Journal Cobden Local News*, May 14, 1887; *Jonesboro Journal, Alto Pass Local News,* April 5, 1879; David E. Schob, *Hired Hands and Plowboys Farm Labor in the Midwest*

1815-60; Student historian's Interview with Esmeraldo Carmona, Sept. 6, 2003; Student historian's interview with Fernando Chirez, Sept. 5, 2003; Student historian's interview with Karen Flam, Sept. 13, 2003; Student historian's interview with Jerry Kiuder, Sept. 2, 2003; Student historian's interview with Mary Montalvan, Sept. 9, 2003; Student historian's interview with Evelia Nava, Sept. 6, 2003; Student historian's interview with Wayne Randleman, Sept. 13, 2003; Student historian's interview with Gloria Reek, Sept. 11, 2003; Student historian's interview with Martha Sots, Sept. 11, 2003.]

Buckwheat: An Illinois Crop's Growing Uses

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Over the last century and a half, Illinois farmers learned progressively more about the uses of the crop buckwheat and continue their research today. In the past, buckwheat was often used for human consumption as well as feed for livestock. Eventually, however, its use for improving the soil as well as other crop yields was observed. Although it was common in the Northeast and the northern Midwest since colonial times, buckwheat was a new crop for Illinois in the mid-nineteenth century. In the history of experimentation within the state, Illinois farmers discovered and applied many beneficial uses of buckwheat.

Buckwheat was often used for food in Illinois in the mid-1800s. It was a common ingredient in pancake mix and few people could refuse an offer of a hot buckwheat cake. During the winter in Chicago of 1847, buckwheat flour was sold as an item of general consumption. People were not surprised to see a recipe for better tasting buckwheat cakes in the weekly agricultural journal. Not only supplying food for people, the crop was used to feed animals as well. While good fodder for horses and cattle, there were also some accounts that buckwheat fed in the straw was poisonous to hogs. Despite those accounts, buckwheat was an overall food source for the Illinois populace.

Previously considered a valueless crop by many renowned farmers, buckwheat came to be highly appreciated. In 1851, Chicago's agricultural periodical pronounced "that now the number of those who do not raise it is like that of those who formerly cultivated it, very small". Buckwheat was easily grown and could be sown and harvested within two months. Its quick maturity lessened the workload for farmers. Buckwheat fitted nicely within the agricultural year, ripening in September between the gathering of the common summer and fall crops. Its adaptability also made it a regularly successful crop, with comparative ease in growing in unfavorable soil and outstretched branches that protected the ground from the blazing sun, thus retaining needed moisture. Buckwheat's roots penetrate deep into the ground, and it prevents unwanted plants from growing beneath it. "It is decidedly the best crop to restore fertility and healthful cleanliness to the soil", according to the *Prairie Farmer* in 1851. By 1864, it was common knowledge that buckwheat fertilized the soil and stopped the growth of weeds. Uniquely, honey made from buckwheat conveniently fed the bees during the winter when clover was inaccessible in the harsh rains. Distinct methods of harvesting buckwheat were practiced at this time to achieve ideal yields. The maximum yield was between forty and fifty bushels per acre, although twenty-five to thirty bushels was deemed an adequate amount. Despite strict weather requirements over the course of its growth as well as other uncertainties, buckwheat was considered one of the most rewarding crops a farmer could grow.

Regardless of the many evident benefits of buckwheat, the crop's usage declined after the 1860s. Buckwheat waned as wheat gained importance. While wheat yields increased, buckwheat yields did not, lacking a response to fertility. There was a decline in taste for buckwheat cakes and flour, a decline in demand as livestock feed, little research and breeding effort, and poor response of buckwheat to high fertilization applications and other modern practices. Its inability to adapt to improvement was ill-favored at the same time the yield advantage of modern grains steadily increased. "Buckwheat acreage has decreased every year in

the United States since 1866, and production estimates are no longer given by the United States Department of Agriculture". The crop's relatively low yield and a small demand limited the production. Thus, little buckwheat was grown on Midwestern farms over the course of a century after the 1860s.

In the mid 1970s, buckwheat benefited from resurgence in popularity. The demand for commercially prepared breakfast cereal and buckwheat noodle exports to Japan helped encourage production. The crop's nutritional excellence also assisted in its expansion. Buckwheat contains many nutrients, is the best source of protein in the plant kingdom, and has an amino acid composition nutritionally superior to all cereals, including oats. In the last few decades, buckwheat has been used on small acreages as a specialty crop. Its great potential for serving as a cover crop or a double crop urged farmers to explore it further. New uses for buckwheat increased the crop's business ventures.

After about one hundred and fifty years of uncovering novel information on the uses of buckwheat, new efforts in promoting buckwheat developed more recently in order to grow it for commercial purposed in Illinois. In 1991 the Buckwheat Growers of Illinois formed to help farmers promote buckwheat. The idea was to allow farmers to profit from raising buckwheat while improving their farmland. In 1995, the group raised the crop on approximately 1900 acres at 750 pounds per acre. The members proclaimed the many benefits of buckwheat. It virtually pumps phosphorus into the soil, providing better soil and yields for other crops. Planters growing buckwheat and corn in rotation can expect to harvest three to five bushels more of corn per acre on land where buckwheat was planted beforehand. Buckwheat attracts predatory insects that kill crop-eating pests, thus lessening the need for pesticides. It produces a better crop on poor soils, is less expensive, and is less risky to produce. Along with wheat, buckwheat can produce as much income as a major crop of soybeans or corn. Unlike the major crops, however, buckwheat is beneficial to the soil and can be planted as soon as the wheat is harvested.

In the summer of 1991, officials from the Japanese Buckwheat Millers Association visited the Buckwheat Growers of Illinois to look into heir buckwheat crop. The Illinois organization secured a trial order from the association and the Kasho Company for two hundred metric tons of buckwheat. However, in May 1996 the Buckwheat Growers disbanded after losing their principal customer, the Kasho Company. The former president, Kevin Brussel, has slowly reorganized a smaller-scale buckwheat endeavor and looked at other markets. Thus, more research is being undertaken to promote buckwheat as a commercial crop, an effort that can allow farmers throughout the state and elsewhere to enjoy its countless advantages. [From: "American Housewife", *The Prairie Farmer*, Jan. 1845; "Buckwheat", *The Prairie Farmer*, 1851; "Buckwheat for fodder", *The Prairie Farmer*, 1848; Buckwheat growers of Illinois, "Sustainability in action", http://www.sustainable.org/casestudies/SIA_PDFs/SIA_illinois.pdf, 2003 ; "Buckwheat poisonous to hogs", *The Prairie Farmer*, Oct. 16, 1848; Annie Hassall, "Buckwheat", http://mckenna.cses.vt.edu/cses3444/3444lec14.html, Sept. 25, 2003; Robert Meyers and Louis J. Meinke, "Buckwheat: a multi-purpose, short-season alternative", University of Missouri-Columbia, http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/crops/g04306.htm, Sept. 25, 2003; E.S. Oplinger, E.A. Oelke, M.A. Brinkman and K.A. Kelling, *Alternative Field Crops Manual*, (online), http://newcrop.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/buckwheat.html, Sept. 25, 2003; John Pike, "Buckwheat production in Illinois: an analysis of production practices and marketing possibilities", www.siu.edu/~readi/grains/buckreport.htm, Sept. 8, 2003; A. Willard, "Culture of buckwheat", *The Prairie Farmer*, 1864.]

From Truck Farms to Flower-Growing Greenhouses:
The Era of Chicago's Urban Agriculture

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Luxembourg, a European territory since the Middle Ages, was once a powerful force until becoming part of the French Republic in 1795. After this, Luxembourgers started immigrating to the United States, representing many different ethnic groups including Irish, German, and English immigrants.

More Luxembourgers live in Chicago than in Luxembourg City. Their immigration can be traced back hundreds of years. The first Luxembourgers came to America in the 1630s and settled in New Amsterdam, New York. It was not until the 1830s that large numbers of these immigrants started settling in Chicago, particularly the Rogers Park area. The inexpensive farmland attracted them. The Luxembourgers were known for their truck farms and greenhouses. Today, most of the farms are gone; surviving greenhouses have relocated to the northern and northwest suburbs such as Niles or Des Plaines.

Aside from farming, most Luxembourgers were devout Roman Catholics. They belonged to the parishes of St. Michael, St. Nicholas, St. Boniface, St. Joseph, and St. Henry. In 1905 they built a new church for St. Henry in Chicago's West Ridge neighborhood. The parish was considered a "Luxembourger Parish," which had originally been built in the 1850s.

After the Luxembourgers' arrival in Chicago, they started buying farmland in West Ridge or the Ridge area near the Sulzer farm. They settled in these northern areas because it was cheaper and less expensive to build homes. After the Chicago Fire of 1871, most of Chicago was destroyed. To prevent another fire, Chicago houses had to be built with exterior fireproof walls, an expense many immigrants could not afford. Therefore they moved to Lake View and beyond where wooden houses could still be affordably built.

Most of West Ridge and surrounding areas contained vegetable gardens. Farmers grew beans, peas, melon and corn. Three of the earlier pioneers, John Muno, Adam Zender, and Peter Reinberg cultivated vegetables in the sandy soil. These farms became the largest shippers of celery in the Midwest. Another big farming area was the Budlong Region (Western and Berwyn streets today). Pickle farming was very popular here after Lyman A. Budlong, who was a pioneer in the pickle industry. The pickles were transported by wagons.

A transition from vegetable farming to flower growing came about as a result of the end of the Civil War. More than 360,000 Union soldiers lost their lives, creating a huge need for funeral flowers. In Chicago, flowers were sold to families whose loved ones were buried at Calvary Cemetery. Rosehill Cemetery also had many Civil War soldiers buried there.

Since so many people were in need of flowers, the Luxembourgers switched from cultivating vegetables to growing flowers yearround in large greenhouses that were quickly constructed. Muno, Zender, and Reinberg also switched to the flower growing business because it was so profitable. Many of these greenhouses were located along present day Lincoln Avenue and Winnemac Street. With more Luxembourgers switching to greenhouses, they started dominating these outlying Chicago neighborhoods.

Clarence Hess (West Ridge resident) remembers his parents going to work in the greenhouses with his grandparents. Another Rogers Park resident, Catherine Lulling,

(interviewed in 1926) remembers her father and her family coming to Chicago and taking up truck farming. Her father's farm extended from Peterson and Devon and also from Campbell to Western. The land was not cultivated when they bought it so they had to dig and water but the farm turned out to be a success. "With all our hard work, we had our pleasures," one of the family remembered.

The Luxembourgers were major agricultural contributors in Chicago and they still survive as greenhouse owners. Greenhouses are still owned and operated by Luxembourgers and their families in suburbs such as Niles or Des Plaines. They were responsible for cultivating major crops around the time of the Civil Wa,r and after the war, were responsible for creating the greenhouses needed to grow flowers for the surrounding cemeteries. Without the Luxembourgers, greenhouses and truck farms may not have flourished and the surrounding communities may not have prospered and evolved as they did.

Present-day Chicago does not contain the farms and greenhouses it once did. Residential and commercial interests have replaced them. Now, farming and flower growing have evolved into major corporations competing with the small family owned businesses of years past. While some family owned businesses have survived the majority of them have become a page in history.

[From: Lyman A. Budloug, *Album of Geneology and Biography* (1897); "The Budloug Greenhouses," *American Florist* (Feb. 16, 1907); Stephen Bedell Clark, *The Lakeview Saga*; Chicago Tribune, "Metrouix-Rogers Park Historical Society", www.entertainment.metrouix.chicagotribune.com/top/1,1419,M-Metrouix-Visiting-Attractions; Conservation and Restoration, http://www.fdpcc.com/tier.php?content_id=19&file=cnr-19d2 (Sept.22, 2003); Mary Jo Doyle, Martin Lewin, and Neal Samors, *Chicago's Far North Side*; Neighborhoods within Neighborhoods; Kirmes in Luxembourg, http://www.igd-leo.lu/igd-leo/emigration/kirmes.html (Sept. 22, 2003); Looking for Luxembourgers, http;//www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/lesson26.htm (Sept.23, 2003); Luxembourgers in America, http://www.loc.gov/rr/eruopean/imlu/lumex.html Sept.21, 2003); Luxembourgers in Chicago, http://ww.eskimo.com/~lisanne (sept.21, 2003); Dominie A. Pacyga and Ellen Skeret, *Chicago*; Rogers Park West Ridge Historical Society, www:wecaretoo.com/Organizations/IL/rphws; Audreas Simon, Chicago.]

The Effect Early Pioneer Farmers Had on Government in Illinois

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St. Thomas More, Elgin
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Illinois pioneering farm families came from various backgrounds. This was important in local government. Typically, if a region of farmers originated from a particular area, laws from their origin influenced the laws being made in their new area.

Illinois pioneering farmers fall into three groups. The first group, the French, were the first permanent non-Native American settlers. The second group, the Southerners, came after the Revolutionary War. They were mainly citizens of the United States who originally settled in the southern states and moved on to Illinois for better opportunities. The third group, the Europeans, came especially from Germany and Ireland after the 1830s. Illinois had an excellent reputation for its fertile soil, and most of these pioneers were farmers.

Life in Illinois in the eighteenth century and before any formal government was organized is described as being moral, honest, and innocent. Life after the population increased became more complicated; hence, the need for the government to protect and settle disputes was necessary.

Early French pioneers from 1734 to 1754 were friendly with each other because they had to rely on each other for their well being. This attitude passed from generation to generation. They were strong in their Roman Catholic faith; hence, their original community life was governed by the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. Pioneer French farmers used their church not only for ceremonial masses, but also for political purposes. In the year 1760 the village of Prairie Du Pont was settled by pioneer farmers from other French villages. It was a prosperous settlement. In 1765 it contained fourteen families. These families agreed on how to make and repair the fence of their own common field. Each owner repaired the fence that passed over his land. If land was abandoned, the land would be sold at church to anyone who would make the necessary repairs to it. No regular court of law existed prior to 1765. Before 1765 the customs and laws of France were recognized, and the pioneers followed them. Any politics or rules that they made were reflected on the laws from their homeland.

After 1765 the British took over territorial control and their laws influenced the original pioneer settlers. General Gage, commander-in-chief of all British forces in North America, drafted a proclamation providing a kind of constitution for the governance of Illinois. Catholics were given the right to worship and many other benefits. Very few settlers in Illinois during this time were from England, save those in top government posts. The settlers at this time were mostly farmers who settled in Illinois to benefit from the freedom given them. These early pioneers had very crude laws, which were not written, and public opinion was the basis for most of them. Most serious crimes such as horse or cattle stealing were handled or enforced by the threat of lynch law.

The first substantial influx of inhabitants from the southern states came after the Revolutionary War in 1779 when Illinois was a county of Virginia. Many of these Illinois settlers were poor yeoman farmers, small farmers who cultivate their own land, who had been cheated of good land in Kentucky or Tennessee. They settled in the southern third of Illinois. Because of their experiences with unjust laws from their previous settlements, they were more content with

fewer laws and restrictions. Politics at this time was built largely on favors and relatives. The legal system was not well designed for the administration of justice. Jurors would not vote to convict a kinsman. The usual punishment for crimes was a fine or whipping. A horse thief, for example, might have gotten fifty lashes and a few days in jail or a fine.

Illinois was part of the Northwest Territory for about thirteen years. The ordinance of 1787 created a government for the Northwest Territory. The villages of Illinois did not see their authorized chief for two years.

One important event happened that foretold of the early settlers' desire for a fairer and more democratic society. After the spring of 1787, when the Americans failed to capture control of the court of Kaskaskia, the settlers of Bellefontaine determined to establish a rival and independent court, for which purpose they held an election and chose magistrates. This was an affront to the one French court that had proved its right to exist.

Robert Watts, the French court appointee, addressed the court in Cahokia about the danger that threatened the law and order of the district by this revolution. The court at Cahokia was the only stable power in Illinois at this time, and with a rival court of Americans might have followed disorders that might have produced a civil war. The court of Cahokia acted by prohibiting the holding of any independent assemblies of the people or sessions of the proposed court. The court ordered the movement's leaders in chains for twenty-four hours, and if they disobeyed the new laws, they would be driven from the territory. The Cahokia justices, however, also knew they had to take some measures to satisfy the demands of the Americans.

The right of electing a justice of the peace at each of the two chief settlements was granted at the October session of 1787. On November 2, 1787, a militia officer was also elected by the settlers of Bellefontaine. On April 27, 1790, the representative of the United States erected the county of St. Clair and appointed the judges of the new courts. Cahokia settlers, however, proved they were more capable of self-government. In October 1794, Judge Turner from St. Clair County wanted to shift Cahokia's center of government to Kaskaskia. The settlers petitioned congress for redress and Judge Turner resigned.

In 1800, the population of the Illinois country remained almost unchanged. Soon afterward, as the author Clarence Alvord wrote in his book, *The Illinois Country 1673-1818*, "there was taking place the most important event in the history of the United States and one of the most momentous in the history of humanity – the occupation of the great Mississippi Valley by men of English speech. What the French and British had failed to accomplish, was being brought to pass by the pioneers acting on their own initiative in the hope of bettering their economic condition."

The base of local government was created in the political township. Legislation in 1802, when Illinois was part of the Indiana Territory, provided this. On January 18, 1802, an act was approved that all free males over the age of twenty-one would meet on the first Monday of April to elect township officials. The township clerk, three or more trustees or managers, two or more overseers of the poor, three fence viewers, one lister of taxable property, a sufficient number of supervisors for roads, and one or more constables were the positions to be filled. Between 1800 and 1809, the pioneer farmers were paying more attention to the prairie territory, and by 1806 their population more than doubled.

Illinois settlers began agitating in early 1812 for the right to elect their officials. Referendums were called that proved that public sentiment was nearly unanimous for the change. On September 14, 1812, Governor Edwards proclaimed that an election be held on October 8 - 10 for delegate members of the council and representatives. The right to vote happened because

of these referendums. They were signed mostly by farmers. They asked for the extension of suffrage and the privilege of electing a delegate by popular vote. It also provided that five councilors should be elected in five districts to be designated by the governor and the delegate to congress to be elected by the people instead of by the legislature. This law made the Illinois government the most democratic of any territorial government in the United States at the time. [From Clarence Alvord, *The Illinois Country 1673-1818*; Solon Buck, *Illinois in 1818*; John Cambal, *Reclaiming a Lost Heritage*; John Clayton, The Illinois Fact Book; Robert Howard, *Illinois;* Richard Jenson, *Illinois*; Calvin Pease, *The Story of Illinois*; John Reynolds, *The Pioneer History of Illinois*.]

Truck Farming to flower Growing: Urban Agriculture

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Like many people from Europe who came to the United States looking for a better life, immigrants from Luxembourg came and settled in the areas of Roger Park, Lake View, and Budlong. In those days farming was most important, especially to the Luxembourgers. They were very good farmers, so they were very happy that they found good land in this area to farm. A few prominent pioneers from among these early Luxembourgers were very successful and also helped their countrymen to settle and prosper in this area. One of these men was Nicholas Niles. Nicholas Niles came straight to Chicago. First, he worked in farming but soon he entered politics. He held different positions in government and helped many. Luxembourgers were very hard working people and also very intelligent people. They maintained a close community. They built their churches and were good family people. They created the Luxembourg Brotherhood of America, an organization which brought all Luxembourgers together and was very helpful in community affairs. The Luxembourgers also attracted other settlers to this area from Europe, such as the Germans and Swedes. Along with farming, other businesses sprang up in the area to accommodate the farming necessities. The first farming products were peas, beans, corn and other vegetables. During the Civil War the farmers started raising flowers, which were in great demand for funerals and by the relatives and friends. Then they started a system of greenhouse farming.

The Luxembourgers now developed a new way of farming. Greenhousing is everywhere in the area. Flowers have a very big market in Chicago. Many greenhouses were large, twenty-three by four hundred feet. They called them the houses of the Beauty Plants of America. Many of those houses were along the end of the Lincoln Avenue car line. Carnations were another flower in great demand. Many greenhouses of this kind were built by A.J. Budlong in the north area of Lawrence Avenue. The Budlong family was well organized. Their flowers from the greenhouse's large sections were sold widely.

The greenhouses were also heated in a special way from one central heating plant, the vacuum system and two-inch pipes being used. One unique feature of the heating system is the control of steam in the pipes. Seven pipes in each house were regulated by three valves and as many checks. One valve controls a single pipe, another two pipes and a third and fourth pipe. In this way any number of pipes from one to seven can be readily controlled. This also provides for a little greater heat at the cold ends of the houses, the greater number of pipes heated means a greater radiation from the heaters. Each house has an entirely independent system of pipes. To maintain as even a temperature at the ends as in the centers of the houses, the double ventilation system has been installed, each half being continuous in itself. The new range has been supplied with eight foot Garland gutters. These houses are built of cedar instead of the cypress that is usually preferred. The benches in the six new houses rest on the brick instead of posts, the former being more durable and economical. It is expected that each bench will last for at least eight years.

Besides the Budlong family, other families in the area were very successful in the greenhouse flower growing business. Some big names along Lincoln Avenue were John Muno,

Adam Zender and Peter Reinberg. All constructed big greenhouses for year-round flower cultivation.

As time went on, the area has developed. Homes and business grew in big numbers. The land got very expensive to be used for farming. Many of the old farmers went into different professions. Farming was to remain in the hearts of the Luxembourgers. They looked in the areas northwest of Chicago market. They started moving to the areas of Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles, and Des Plaines.

Here they bought large pieces of land and built their new land farmhouses. These areas also became expensive real estate and have been developed into great communities with people of different nationalities and backgrounds. We can see everywhere many names of streets, towns, parks, and institutions identify their Luxembourgers presence.

In 1920 the Luxembourgers in Chicago numbered 5,080. In 1904, Luxembourgers on the Ridge North side built an impressive new building for Old St. Henry's Church. St. Henry's Church is considered to be the mother church for all Roman Catholic churches north of Irving Park, including Evanston.

The World War I memorial was in Chicago. That memorial was conceived in St. Henry's on November 27, 1919, to honor three young parishioners that were killed in actions.

In short, the Luxembourgers were not left behind. For example, they were very proud of the Rogers Park Soccer Football club. They had become full-hearted American citizens participating in social and economic activities and also in the political field. The Luxembourgers never forgot their old country either. [From A.T. Andreas, *History of Cook County Illinois from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*; Dale Chihuly, Chihuly, *Gardens and Glass*, Boston: Cortstein press, 1993; Bedell Clark, *The Lake view Sage* 1937-1985; William B. Eerdmas, Ethnic Chicago; "Luxembourgers in Chicago", Sept. 19, 2003, http://www.eskimo.com/~lisanne/; Arthur Mann, Ethnic Chicago; Rogers Park Historical Society, http://entertainment.metromix.chicagotribune.com; Sept. 19, 2003; Richard J. Witry, Luxembourg Brotherhood of America.]

Small Company, Big Contribution

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When one thinks of agriculture, one generally thinks of land and crops. However, one should also consider the tools that help to plant and harvest the crops. Many towns in Illinois, big and small, had businesses that produced these tools. Belleville was one such town surrounded by some of Illinois' fertile soil.

In 1848, two strangers walked into the blossoming town of Belleville, Illinois. This was the first event in a chain that led to the birth of an influential agricultural machinery manufacturing company. The existence of the company eventually spanned over ninety years and grew in name and size over time. The company became known as the Harrison Machine Works.

The two strangers' names were John Cox and Cyrus Roberts. They rented a small shop in Belleville and began to build vibrating threshing machines. These machines were used to separate the head, or grain, of wheat from the stem, or straw. They added some improvements of their own to the machine. On October 28, 1851, the two men received a patent for these improvements. Their machines, using the patented inventions, could function constantly. This was an enormous difference when compared to the earlier models that needed to be regularly stopped and cleaned. On April 16, 1861, Roberts obtained another patent for further improvements. These two patents added greatly to the development of the vibrating threshing machine.

Around 1855, it is believed that Theophilus Harrison, William C. Buchanan, and Frank Middlecoff purchased the company from Cox and Roberts. It is unknown who exactly was involved in the sale due to the fact that early threshing machine company history often lacks reliable sources. However, from this point on until 1878, it is known that Theophilus Harrison and William C. Buchanan were the primary operators of Harrison and Company, as the company was called. It is also known that in 1874, Hugh Harrison and Cyrus Thompson both joined the business. It was at this time that the name was changed to the Harrison Machine Works.

Four years after Harrison and Thompson joined the company, on November 12, it was incorporated. The four stockholders were Theophilus Harrison, William C. Buchanan, Cyrus Thompson and Hugh W. Harrison. Each held 750 shares of stock valued at $75,000 each. On November 26, 1878 in Belleville, Illinois, the first official meeting was held. The report of that meeting was filed with the Illinois Secretary of State on November 29, 1878. As a result, the secretary of state certified that the Harrison Machine Works was a legally organized corporation. It was at this time that Hugh Harrison and Cyrus Thompson became major leaders in the company, and stayed as such until 1927.

During the time of incorporation, the country was emerging from the economic depression of 1873. The economy improved in the early 1880s, but then dipped again by 1885. A panic occurred in 1893, but it was followed by a great upswing referred to as a period of corporate prosperity. It lasted from about 1900 to 1906.

Throughout its history, Harrison Machine Works experienced several setbacks and successes. In 1872, a fire caused $5,000 in damage to the foundry, which was a severe loss. In spite of the loss, in this same year the company bought additional space and spent $40,000 to

install electrical wiring and add a new boiler. The need for this extra space and the other improvements was required for the company to construct steam traction engines. By April 1874 the first engine had been completed. This was not only the first for the company, but actually the first ever produced in Belleville. On March 28 of that same year, the company showed the new engine in a Belleville parade. Behind it marched the 200 workers of the company.

In 1885, disaster struck again. Nearby Richland Creek flooded and caused hundreds of dollars in damage to a newly constructed warehouse and the machines stored inside. However, later this year the company received good news. In September, the Harrison rice thresher won the Gold Medal at the New Orleans Exposition. This was an important step to agricultural companies, because these awards could be used to prove how good were their wares. Five years later, in 1890, a second fire destroyed several sheds. Between 1890 and 1914, the company experienced good and bad economic times. The farm machine companies were dependent on the needs of the farmers. During World War I, there was a great need for American farm products. Because of this there was an increased demand for farm machinery. Harrison Machine Works, along with other companies, flourished. After the war ended, the farm industry faced a recession that could force entire companies to close.

However, eight years later, the Harrison Machine Works faced the greatest threat to its existence. It was accidentally discovered that an out-of-state association was planning to buy out the company and move it. Already one-third of the company's stocks had been purchased. The president of the company urged the sale of the remaining $200,000 worth of stock so that it could stay where it was. The entire scenario was thought, by Cyrus Thompson, to be caused by the lack of interest among the shareholders who lived far away, on the Pacific Coast. These people had little interest in the company. While this was in fact a great danger to the Harrison Machine Works, the move out of Belleville was averted.

In spite of its many improvements and awards, by 1926, the decline of the agricultural economy took its toll on the company's profits. There was word that the company might be sold. St. John's Hospital, Sisters of St. Francis, and St. Elizabeth's Hospital of Belleville, which was located near the company, all joined together and offered $150,000 to purchase the land on which the Harrison Machine Works was located. The company's officers, Cyrus Thompson, William A. Thompson, Lee Harrison Jr., and Nic Herzler, agreed. While many speculated that this deal was made because of financial distress within the company, the newspapers assured otherwise. The stockholders met and filed a certificate of dissolution that split up the remaining funds in relation to the stocks they owned. However, the dollar numbers do suggest that there were some financial problems. While in the beginning of the business's life, the stocks had been valued at a collective $300,000, by 1926, these same shares were only worth $135,000.

In September, 1927, the Harrison Machine Works purchased four acres of property on East Main Street. It constructed a new factory that opened the next year. However, this time it had to deal with the growing popularity of the gasoline tractor engine and the grain combine. These two inventions threatened the company severely and most likely led to the decline in sales. The Great Depression added to its problems, and eventually led to its end.

The history of Harrison Machine Works is long and varied. From fires to parades, it had seen the best and worst of times. It may not have been the largest farming company, but it struggled through hard times and still it managed to succeed. It remains one of the most commonly referenced nineteenth and early twentieth century agricultural machinery companies today. [From Joe Park and Joe Graziana, "Harrison Machine Works", *Engineers and Engines*, Mar. 1988.]

Dixon Springs Experimental Station

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Imagine what it would be like to live on eroded land that was incapable of production. Imagine living in a run-down farmhouse without electricity or running water. Imagine life in Pope County in 1933. This description of everyday life of Pope County farmers is far from appealing and, indeed, the poor conditions that these people lived affected their lives as well as their farming. With little money, worn out fields, and dwindling numbers of livestock, there seemed to be little hope for the destitute farmers. It did not take the state of Illinois long to realize that the Pope County area was in dire need of help and guidance. With the establishment of Dixon Springs Experimental Station to help improve farmland and farming techniques, Pope County was able to not only overcome its poverty-stricken lifestyle but also become an important agricultural area in Illinois.

Life certainly was not easy for the average farmer in Pope County. There was little profit in food production even though it was so high priced, and many farmers lost their farms due to low prices. Homes were in poor repair and many times the only literature was the mail-order catalog and a copy of the local weekly paper. Little work was done on the farms and electric lines were not built in the rural areas; as a result there were few telephones. Highways were not even paved at this time; most driving was on narrow dirt roads. The conditions were so bad that even during the Great Depression many people were unaware of a major change. According to a history of the Dixon Springs Experimental Station, "Hardship had been the constant guest in many homes before [the Great Depression]" and it left a lasting mark on the life of the farmers. Many of the difficulties of the depression had increased because so many of the unemployed from the cities came to Pope County to raise their own food. This increase in the number of farms and in the farming population was most common in the poor, cheap areas where the land was "incapable of responding with any abundance to the rather feeble efforts, improper tillage and lack of attention to the fertility needs of the soil." In 1934 most of the families in the Dixon Springs area only had an annual income of about $300 or less, barely enough for a family to survive on. Much of the land was first utilized for lumber production since Pope County was once covered with hardwood forests. General farming was instated after the timber resources were used up and "lack of attention to the maintenance of soil productivity was accompanied by gradually declining yields of crops, reducing numbers of livestock and decreasing income." When the trees were gone and tillage disturbed the soil, the shallow layer of topsoil was soon eroded. Because of this erosion, the benefits of fertilizers were ineffective, resulting in unproductive yields and unmanageable fields. Because of this unintentional mismanagement, the fields grew into "a tangled mass of brush, briars, and sassafras and persimmon sprouts, the roots and fruits of which had very limited markets." The farming industry was in serious need of reform in order to bring Pope County citizens out of the rut they were living in.

The College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois first sought to establish an agricultural experiment station in southern Illinois in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Land Program Committee purchased large areas of forest and forest-type land in Southern Illinois, allowing the College of Agriculture to use some of the land as an experimental station. The experimental

station was proposed "for the study of soil erosion, reforestation, and livestock production into a system of farming involving the use of pastures and forage crops." A site was chosen north of Dixon Springs on Highway 146 near Glendale and Robbs. The area was named Dixon Springs Experimental Station and consisted of a total of 9,861 acres, which was purchased under the land-acquisition program.

The work done at Dixon Springs benefited the farmers immensely and allowed them to not only increase their yields, but also learn the best ways to produce their crops. Before the majority of the work was done, resettlement and rehabilitation organizations developed plans for the roads, land, and facilities. House designs were put together according to the number of people in the family, their ages, and the number of livestock they would receive. All the plans were made in consideration of topography, drainage, sanitation, and general access. Most of the planning and technical work had to be done by outside workers since the local people were not trained in this area. Instead, representatives from the University of Illinois determined the location of plots, houses, barns, roads, facilities for water, and design of the administration building. They decided that much of the fieldwork could be done with government surplus horses and four barns were then erected. The Soil Conservation Service built houses, laboratories, and devices to study run-off and soil losses on various slopes, and the influence of different tillage methods and vegetative soil covers on soil erosion. Gauges were set up to measure rainfall in relation to erosion and discovered that with good grass cover it would take up to 300 years to lose an inch of topsoil instead of the current ten. This began the process of improved soil management and led to the development and increased use of minimum-tillage methods for row crops. All of these methods as well as fertilization, pasture work, and cattle tests all taught the farmers ways in which they could improve their fields and learn the best ways to tend their crops.

Dixon Springs Experimental Station was the hope that Pope County needed. For the first time it allowed farmers to work under the guidance of people who knew some of the best farming techniques of the time. The various methods and techniques they were taught improved the fields, prevented erosion, increased cattle numbers, and overall improved the farmers' lives. It is hard to imagine how the Dixon Springs area would have gotten out of poverty without the experimental station and indeed, without it, it would not be the great agricultural area that it is today. [From *Dixon Springs,* http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/iaes.html (Aug. 28, 2003); *Dixon Springs Experimental Station,* http://www.cropsci.uiuc.edu/research/rds/dixonsprings/history.html (Aug. 28, 2003); *Pope County, Illinois History and Families 1816-1986;* W. Kammlade, P. Rexroat and H. Cate, *Redeeming a Lost Heritage The Development of the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center.]*

The History of the Round Barn Farm

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The Round Barn Farm has brought a rich history to Manhattan in Will County, Illinois, over the years. The money the Round Barn has made has helped improve and add to the farm.

In the early 1830s, Manhattan Township as we know it was inhabited by a few wolf hunters and Indians in a temporary hunting camp. The land that Round Barn rests on is called Five Mile Grove. The creek that runs through the grove is called Jackson Creek. The 1840 census showed only two families living in Manhattan. Clark Baker, from New York, came to the Manhattan area in 1842, and he bought half of Bushrod Buck's land. In 1848, he bought a southern quarter of Bushrod Buck's land.

Clark Baker, his wife and five children remained at Five Mile Grove until 1850 and were said to have in 'poor circumstances'. However, by 1877, the Bakers owned more than 1200 acres. He also served as Township Supervisor for ten years and justice of the peace for twenty-five years. Baker's son, John, managed the farm and directed the two round barns he built there in 1898. Clark Baker died before the barns were built. The lumber used to build the barns came from the World's Fair in Chicago.

At first the farm was known as Grove Stock Farms and raised short-horned cattle and Chester White hogs under Clark's son, John. The completed barn measures a hundred feet in diameter and sixty feet high and was one of the largest round barns in Illinois. The four-level building took approximately five years to construct and was one of the five round barns built in Will County.

From the mid-1950s, Frank Koren has owned the Round Barn. He raised beef cattle until about 1985. In 1986, the barn underwent minor construction to make it a public museum. The barn was designated a Will County Historic Landmark on, November 18, 1999.

The original Round Barn is now the Round Barn Museum. The museum displays artifacts from 1800 to the early-1900s that were used in the local area. The barn museum has five levels. The first one contains many pieces of horse-drawn farm machinery. The first level originally housed cows and horses used in the dairy operations. The second level held hay while the third level was an apartment. The second level now holds various items used on the farm. The third level holds items used in a farm home and the fourth level is a good spot for viewing the architecture of the inside of the barn. The fifth level allows air to circulate inside the barn.

The historic name for the barn is John C. Baker Barn. Its well-known name is Baker-Koren Barn otherwise known as Round Barn Farm Museum. In March 2003, the idea of making the Round Barn a rural gem occurred. The current owner, Frank Koren, who is 82 years old, asked the Manhattan Township Park District if it wanted to buy his farm. The park district decided not to farm the land or operate the petting zoo, but to keep the pumpkin festivals and occasional petting zoo events. The township wanted the barn to produce enough revenue from programs and activities to help pay for its maintenance. The Round Barn's preservation has become more of a priority since Manhattan is developing to the north.

Round barns are a disappearing resource that many groups want to save. The current price for admission is four dollars per person (age two through adults). Children under two are free. On weekends pony rides are two dollars and barrel train rides are one dollar.

People who have been to Round Barn come back home with a good feeling. When I went there, it was Halloween and I spent a whole day there. The barn was set up as being haunted. The very top of the inside of the barn was the haunted house. The theme was a haunted circus and was not really scary until I got around the exit. I came home tired, but I had fun while I was there.

The Round Barn has come a long way from its beginning including land size and use. Hopefully, in the future, the Round Barn will do the same thing. [From Student historian's interview with Alana Ferry, Round Barn Farm, April 27, 2003; The Round Barn Museum, "The Round Barn Museum circa 1898", ,http://www.willcountylanduse.com/hpc/roundbarn.html (Apr. 24, 2003); Round Barn Farm, "Round Barn Farm, Pumpkinfest, Picnic Outing, Halloween and Recreation Area", "SuburbanChicagoNews.com, Manhattan area looks for team effort to keep local attention", http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/archives/heraldnews/2003/20030308_16.htm (Apr. 26, 2003); The Round Barn Museum, "The Round Barn", http://mywebpages.comcast.net/carlutt/rb/museum.htm (Apr. 24, 2003).]

Illinois Agricultural Revolution

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Have you ever taken a look around and contemplated how the state of Illinois became so rich in agriculture? This land had long been farmed by generation after generation, from the first settlers to the farmers of today. Fertile soil, complemented by the determination of many to improve farming techniques, has propelled Illinois into a leading agricultural area.

Illinois' earliest farmers lived mostly by subsistence farming, growing crops in small plots and gardens protected by split-rail fences. For an additional source of income, many farmers found it beneficial to raise livestock such as cattle and hogs.

Easy to cultivate, and adaptable to the prairie, corn soon became Illinois' most abundant staple crop. In these early years, long before plows and reapers were invented, farmers planted crops manually by dropping a single seed into a hole made by using an axe or pointed stick, and covering it with their boot heel. Then, besides consuming corn for their own pleasure, it could be ground into meal, or dried to feed livestock. Some of those who owned larger farms needed not to worry since most work was done by slaves.

Farmers soon began expanding their farms in southern Illinois by clearing timber, since they knew the ground beneath would be most fertile. In no time, they found themselves producing surplus foods. In order to reach the marketplace, farmers realized they must find a way to transport their products to growing cities such as St. Louis, Chicago, Memphis, and New Orleans. They exported their first goods mostly by river.

During the 1830s, farmers began producing larger and larger surpluses at harvest time, creating a need for an even better source of transportation. Canals were seen as a possible solution because of the recent success of the Erie Canal, which brought many immigrants into Illinois from the east. It was not long before farmers realized that this canal could be used to transport goods to the Atlantic Seaboard. As a result, Illinoisans built a canal linking Chicago with the Illinois and Mississippi River system. But before this canal--also known as the Illinois-Michigan Canal--was completed in 1848, the Illinois legislature voted to assemble a North-South railroad from Freeport to Cairo and from Lake Michigan diagonally southwest to connect to the north-south line. By the early 1880s, a railroad station was located within a few miles of almost every farm. Railroad construction rocketed Illinois' agricultural status sky-high. The railroad was given vast tracts of land by the federal government to help cover the construction costs, which in turn they sold to potential buyers at $1.25 an acre. Simultaneously, cities in Illinois, with their rapid population growth demanded for more goods.

With land values doubling numerous times in the 1800s, many farmers became prosperous, and the amount of cultivated land increased greatly with the help of new tools and techniques. After the turn of the century, the appearance of the Model-T Ford, steam-powered tractors, and later gasoline powered tractors paved the way for farmers of today, making farming faster and less difficult.

Today, farmers must have the skills of computer technicians, scientists, mechanics, and even accountants. Illinois has been a leader in agriculture for well over a century. It has had the advantage of fertile, rolling land and a climate favorable for growing a variety of crops. Most importantly, Illinois farmers love the land and have worked tirelessly to create the agricultural

revolution of Illinois. [From Robert P. Howard, *Illinois;* Ronald E. Nelson, *Illinois: A Geographical Survey;* Lois A. Carrier, *Illinois;* Illinois State Historical Society, *Welcome to Illinois,* http://www.historyillinois.org/frames/markers/345.htm (Sept. 5, 2003); Illinois State Historical Society, *Thy Wondrous Story, Illinois,* http://www.historyillinois.org/frames/markers/309.htm (Sept. 5, 2003).]